

Fast Facts

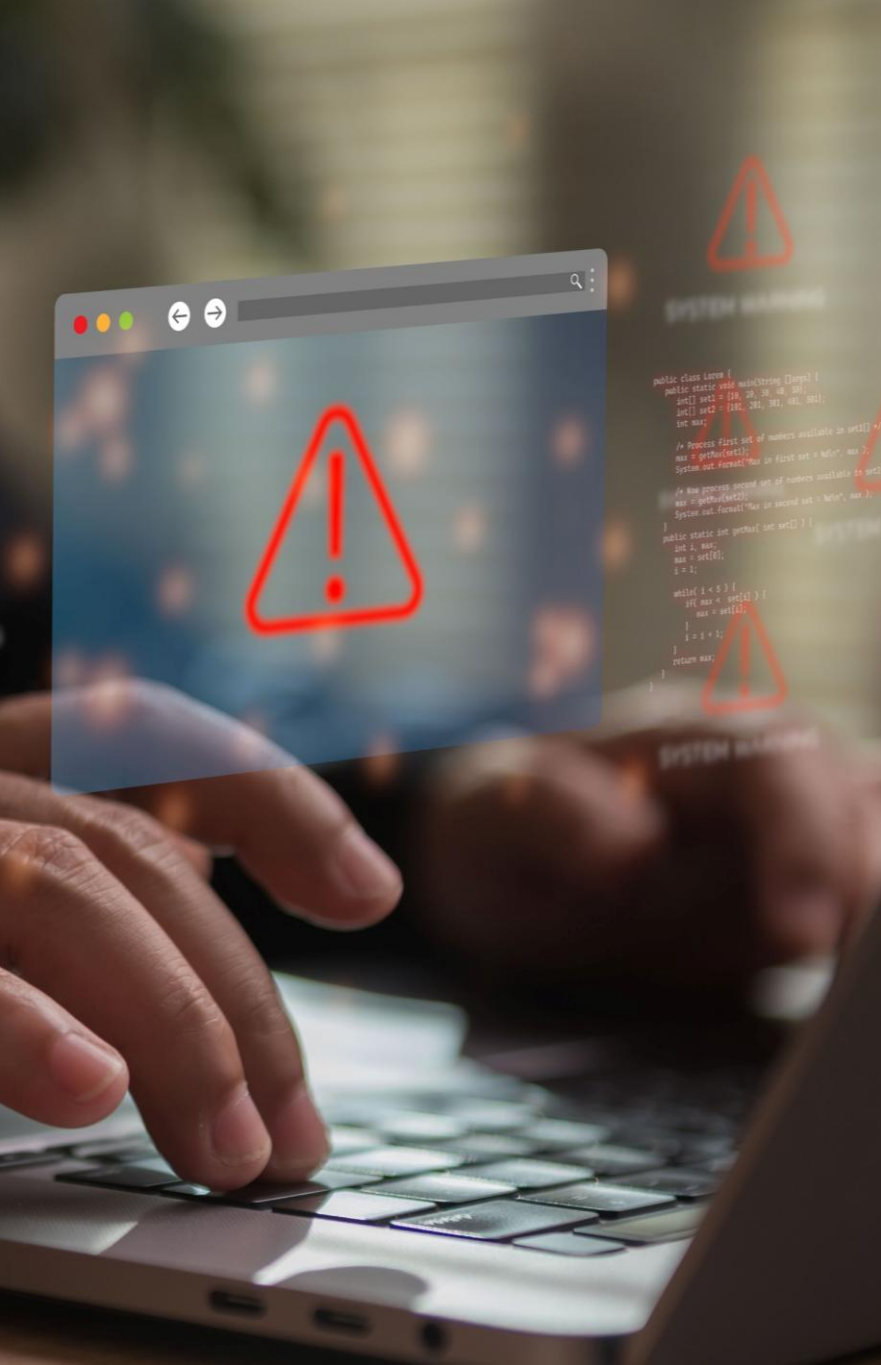


What you need to know about new & emerging trends, platforms or technology

Friend or Frenemy?

Examining the Reasons Why Facebook Bans Billions of Accounts Each Year





The pervasiveness of fake accounts and scams negatively impacts both consumers and brands

Fake accounts on social media platforms **undermine consumer trust** and **create brand safety risks** for advertisers. These fake accounts infiltrate social platforms by the billions with perpetrators using false identities for malicious intent to harm consumers and drive deceitful actions by bots.

To understand how widespread this issue is, we examined the **number of fake accounts that Facebook has banned on an annual basis**.

While Meta hasn't published the number of false and duplicate accounts within their SEC-regulated filings since 2023, they do provide data on fake accounts in their [transparency center](#) online which we referenced for our analysis.

The number of banned accounts on Facebook is **indicative of the scale of consumer and brand safety issues** involving fraud, scams and the selling of illicit goods across Meta Platforms.

Due to the pervasiveness and persistence of these issues, brands and consumers should both be asking themselves – **is Facebook & Meta a friend or frenemy?**

How many fake accounts does Facebook ban each year?



Facebook banned three and a half billion fake accounts on their platform in 2025 and more than **38 billion accounts** over the last eight years

Fake Accounts Banned by Facebook
In Billions



Source: VAB analysis of Meta Transparency Center, Fake Accounts – Facebook, Accounts Actioned, as of 4/28/26. 'Accounts Actioned' refers to fake accounts banned.

The number of fake Facebook accounts are the equivalent of nearly half the world's population, underscoring the magnitude of this issue

Banned Fake Facebook Accounts' Share of Global Population

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
Fake Accounts Banned by Facebook	3.34B	6.50B	5.80B	6.50B	5.80B	2.62B	4.33B	3.50B
Global Population*	7.73B	7.81B	7.89B	7.95B	8.02B	8.09B	8.16B	8.23B
Fake Accounts Banned % Share of Global Population	43%	83%	74%	82%	72%	32%	53%	43%

Source: VAB analysis of Meta Transparency Center, Fake Accounts – Facebook, Accounts Actioned, as of 4/28/26. *VAB analysis of United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2024), World Population Prospects: The 2024 Revision, custom data acquired via UN Data Portal – Population Division website as of 4/28/26. 'Accounts Actioned' refers to fake accounts banned.

Further sizing this issue, the number of fake Facebook accounts banned is typically much larger than the count of actual monthly active users

Ratio of Fake Facebook Accounts to Monthly Active Users

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
Fake Accounts Banned by Facebook	3.34B	6.50B	5.80B	6.50B	5.80B	2.62B	4.33B	3.50B
Facebook's Monthly Active Users (MAU)*	2.26B	2.43B	2.71B	2.89B	2.95B	3.03B	'Monthly Active Facebook Users' No Longer Reported by Meta	'Monthly Active Facebook Users' No Longer Reported by Meta
Ratio of Fake Accounts Banned to Monthly Active Users (MAU)*	1.5	2.7	2.1	2.2	2.0	0.9	N/A	N/A

Source: VAB analysis of Meta Transparency Center, Fake Accounts – Facebook, Accounts Actioned, as of 4/28/26. 'Accounts Actioned' refers to fake accounts banned. *VAB analysis of Meta Platforms, Inc. annual company filings. Based on average of quarterly monthly active users worldwide.

The number of banned accounts on Facebook is indicative of the scale of consumer & brand safety issues involving fraud, scams and illicit goods across Meta Platforms



Based on their own internal documents and estimates, Meta knows that its' platforms are **flooded with scams and fraudulent ads**

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

May 15, 2025

TECHNOLOGY

Meta Battles an 'Epidemic of Scams' as Criminals Flood Instagram and Facebook

Fake puppies and phony offers of mouthwatering bargains are often seeded by overseas crime networks; employees say company is reluctant to impede its advertising juggernaut

 Reuters

November 6, 2025

A REUTERS SPECIAL REPORT

Meta is earning a fortune on a deluge of fraudulent ads, documents show

Meta projected 10% of its 2024 revenue would come from ads for scams and banned goods, documents seen by Reuters show. And the social media giant internally estimates that its platforms show users 15 billion scam ads a day. Among its responses to suspected rogue marketers: charging them a premium for ads – and issuing reports on 'Scammiest Scammers.'

 Meta

December 3, 2025

Meta's detection systems identified and disrupted nearly **12 million accounts across Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp in the first half of 2025 associated with criminal scam centers.**

 StratNews
Global

December 15, 2025

**Meta's \$3 Billion Fraud Problem:
How Chinese Advertisers Exploited
Facebook and Instagram**

 REUTERS

December 15, 2025

**Meta tolerates rampant ad
fraud from China to safeguard
billions in revenue**

Most new advertisers on Facebook and Instagram are promoting fake 'products' that no legitimate brand would want to be associated with



70%

of newly active advertisers on Instagram and Facebook were promoting scams, poor quality products or illicit goods

Source: New York Times, [Meta Battles an 'Epidemic of Scams' as Criminals Flood Instagram and Facebook](#), 5/15/25.



Criminals are also using Facebook and Instagram to impersonate real businesses for their own nefarious benefit



4,400 ads

were found impersonating a real business' name and phone number on Instagram and Facebook, while the original, legitimate business purchased only 15 ads across those two platforms

Source: New York Times, [Meta Battles an 'Epidemic of Scams' as Criminals Flood Instagram and Facebook](#), 5/15/25.



Meta platforms delivered **over 15 billion higher risk scam ads each day** in 2024, creating a negative experience for both consumers and brands



15 Billion

**‘higher risk’ scam advertisements
daily on Meta platforms in 2024**

Source: Reuters, *Meta is earning a fortune on a deluge of fraudulent ads, documents show*, 11/6/25. Estimates from Meta internal projections.

Scam ads are deeply pervasive across Meta platforms, accounting for **10% of their total revenue (\$16 billion)** in 2024

“It is easier to advertise scams on Meta platforms than Google.”

Meta Internal Review
via Reuters (11/6/25)

"Scams don't just harm individual victims, they undermine trust in our entire advertising ecosystem, which is the very foundation of our business model."

Meta Newsroom
(12/3/2025)



\$16 Billion

of Meta's revenue came from ads promoting scams and banned goods in 2024, estimated at **10% of total revenue**

Source: Reuters, [Meta is earning a fortune on a deluge of fraudulent ads, documents show](#), 11/6/25. Estimates from Meta internal projections.

Since **Meta allows many violations before acting**, it's reasonable to believe that Facebook should have banned much more than 3.5 billion accounts



8 to 32

financial fraud strikes* are allowed for Meta advertisers before their account is banned



Source: New York Times, [Meta Battles an 'Epidemic of Scams' as Criminals Flood Instagram and Facebook](#), 5/15/25.
*Strikes on Meta for advertisers are a punitive, step-by-step enforcement system applied when ads or connected pages violate Community Standards or Advertising Policies.

Summary: While brand safety issues are rife across Meta platforms, marketers can turn to Premium Video to achieve real performance

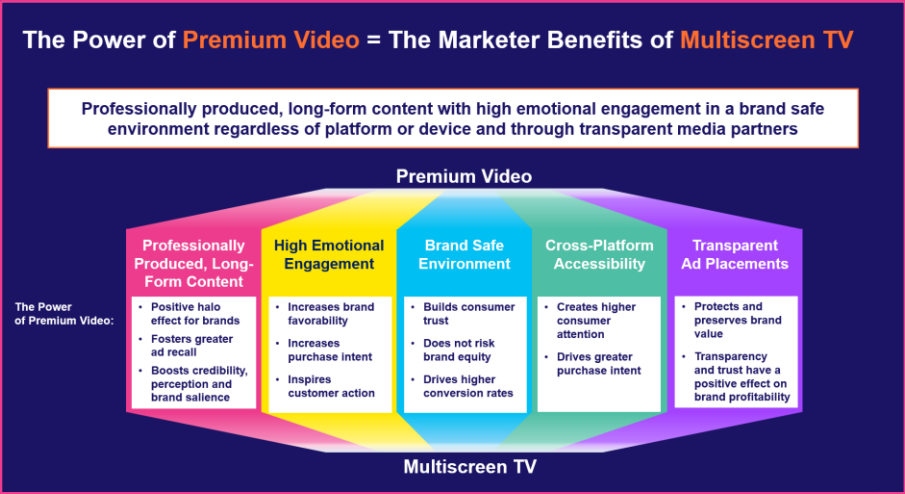
Scam & Fraud Issues Across Meta Platforms

3.5 billion
fake Facebook accounts
banned in 2025 alone

8 to 32
financial fraud strikes are
allowed for Meta advertisers
before their account is banned

70%
of new advertisers on
Instagram and Facebook were
promoting scams, poor quality
products or illicit goods

\$16 billion
in Meta revenue from
ads promoting scams
and banned goods in 2024



To learn more, download
'The Power of Premium Video'

Download these other VAB resources to understand more about the importance of transparency, brand safety and quality within ad campaigns



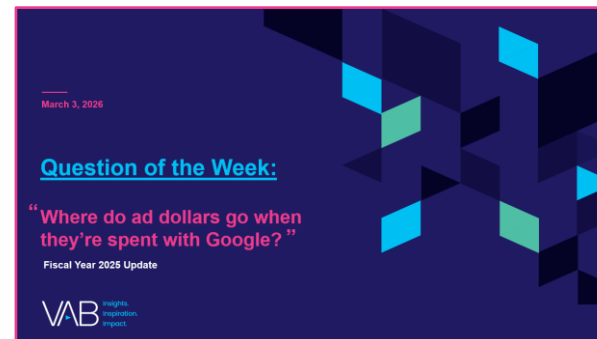
The Illusions of the Internet
Uncovering the Fallacies & Realities of Audience, Advertising & Content



Exposed
5 Inconvenient Truths We Learned From Marketers



Deleted Scenes
Analyzing How Much 'Unsafe' Content YouTube Removes From Their Platform



Where do ad dollars go when they're spent with Google?

Visit our [Transparency & Brand Safety Hub](#) to learn more about the importance of a transparent, accurate and competitive video advertising marketplace.

Transparency & Brand Safety

VAB Insights Hub

About VAB

VAB plays a dual role in the video advertising industry. We are leading the change to bring about a more innovative and transparent marketplace. We also provide the insights and thought leadership that enables marketers to develop business-driving marketing strategies.

Drawing on our marketing expertise, we **simplify** the complexities in our industry and **discover** new insights that **transform** the way marketers look at their media strategy.



We are committed to your business growth and proud to offer VAB members, brand marketers and agencies ***complimentary access*** to our continuously-growing Insights library. **Get immediate access** at theVAB.com.

